

The Things That Happen In New York



By
James Hanson
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Cast of Characters

<u>Hank</u> :	About 31, Sarah's husband, sarcastic
<u>Sarah</u> :	About 28, Hank's wife, optimistic
<u>Ted</u> :	About 25, male, Hank's Brother
<u>Joyce</u> :	About 24, female, Ted's wife

Scene

Ted's livingroom

Time

An evening.

ACT I/SCENE 1

(At Rise: HANK is sitting on the living room couch, sipping from a mug of coffee. Highlights of a baseball game plays on the TV (Mets against Orioles.) If a TV prop is not accessible, a newspaper turned to the sports section will do. HANK looks displeased and shakes his head every time the Orioles take the lead. TED is swaying with one of his babies behind the couch, humming a lullaby and peeking at the highlights or newspaper. After the highlights, HANK focuses on his laptop, which is on the coffee table. SARAH enters the stage and kisses him on the cheek.)

HANK

(Shakes his head as if trying to shake off the kiss)

Please don't kiss me. I'm not in a pleasant mood.

SARAH

(Smiling)

The deed has already been done.

HANK

Sorry, the Mets have broken my heart once again.

TED

That's a lot of heartbreaks this season.

HANK

And more to come.

TED

(Points to the portrait on the wall)

Remind me to take down that picture of Dad from off the wall. He has to see all this, which isn't making him rest in peace.

SARAH

Where would you put your Dad?

TED

(sounding agitated)

Anywhere but in front the TV during this woeful season.

SARAH

That picture has been on that wall for how many years?

(SARAH kisses the baby on the forehead and plays with it.)

TED
About eight years.

SARAH
(stops playing with the baby)
And you want to move it, breaking tradition?

TED
Okay, leave it. Just leave it. Before the floor opens up and swallows us.

HANK
(To SARAH)
But if his smile turns upside down, it's on you.

TED
(To HANK)
Are we going to die Mets fans like Dad?

HANK
My loyalty is slowly withering away. By the end of the season I may shop around for a new team. The Yankees?

SARAH
(Gasps)
That's unthinkable. Your dad would never put up with that sort of rivalry.

TED
I may shop around with him, and head where he's heading.

SARAH
You two are a disgrace. And right in front your father. No Honor! So called Mayweather men!

TED
Dad did prophesy about this day. He said we'd grow up to disown the Mets and disgrace the family.

SARAH
He was a wise man.

HANK
I don't miss his presidential speeches. Dad just exaggerated everything. Me getting bullied in middle school was an act of war to him.

TED
His speeches were inspiring though. You made it through middle school, and became tougher than me.

HANK

I did, didn't I?

TED

Please, Hank. It was a compliment. Not an opportunity to gloat.

HANK

I just acknowledged that you were correct.

SARAH

Don't fight guys.

TED

Who's fighting?

HANK

We're not fighting, and if we were fighting, you know who the winner would be.

TED

(shaking his head)

I had to feed your ego.

HANK

You did, and I thank you for that. I haven't felt this good in quite some time. Life's been that stressful.

TED

I'm sorry about your apartment, Hank. I wish I had the money to help you pay the rent that you owe, but Joyce and I are broke.

HANK

If you could do more, you would. I know that.

SARAH

(To HANK)

I don't want to lose the apartment. It has so many memories, especially yours. But it was nice of Ted and Joyce to have us stay here after being evicted.

HANK

Remember when I invited you to meet my parents?

SARAH

How could I? I vomited the dinner that was kindly prepared for me.

(TED goes offstage to an unseen bedroom with the baby.)

HANK

But they loved you anyway.

SARAH

They said my humor made up for it.

HANK

You sure joked yourself out of that disaster.

SARAH

If only they were here, alive and well. Maybe they could have offered us some advice.

HANK

My mom would slap me for not taking good care of you. My dad, he'd just take me out fishing. Because fishing solves everything.

(TED dances into the living room and stops in front of the couch.)

TED

Baby number two is in bed.

HANK

That's interesting, because they seem to have a pact. When one goes to sleep, the other wakes up. So you don't ever get relief. Any minute now we'll be hearing the cries of baby number one. Sad to say they're out to get you.

TED

But you have my back, bro.

HANK

I have no part in this baby business you're running.

TED

But you're their uncle.

HANK

Not a very good one.

TED

(To HANK)

Are you up for watching the game this evening?

HANK

Sure, sure. I think I've recovered from the Mets last outing. But there's a risk of me assaulting the TV because of pent up frustration.

TED
I have a stress ball that you could borrow.

HANK
While watching the game I might pop the ball.

TED
Have you ever tried putting a rubber band around your wrist and snapping it every time you got upset? I've heard that works.

HANK
I haven't tried that one, but all I'm seeing is blood.

TED
Your case is extreme.

HANK
But anyway, why are you smiling so much? Because of your sleeping babies?

TED
That too. I'm smiling because I'm happy. Really Happy!

HANK
Envy is just eating me up inside. Your happiness doesn't compliment this (pointing to his miserable looking face) face, but rather intensifies it. You make my misery pop. So please, don't over do it with the happiness.

TED
Joyce called me in the bedroom and said she'll be going on a business trip tomorrow, and will be gone for four days!

SARAH
I'm telling Joyce. Remember, we're best friends, and we talk about everything.

HANK
Why are you so stupid, Ted?

TED
(To SARAH)
Can we negotiate?

SARAH
Does Hank say anything like that behind my back?

TED
(Nervously)
We just talk about guy stuff.

SARAH

Right.

TED

(To SARAH)

You don't mind us watching the game here?

SARAH

Of course not. But I will be in the bedroom with Joyce. If the Mets are winning, I don't want to be here when it's raining beer.

TED

Understandable. But statistically, there's a twenty percent chance of the Mets beating the Yankees.

SARAH

I'm not taking that chance.

TED

(To HANK)

My wife also hates baseball.

HANK

Dad had warned us not to marry any woman that doesn't love baseball. That was his only commandment. But we rebelled anyway.

TED

And he fell in love with them.

HANK

Got to hand it to them, they softened the heart of the beast.

TED

We were both scared to present them to Dad. With Joyce, I felt like I was throwing her into the den of a lion. But after it all, Dad loved her, even though she wasn't into baseball.

HANK

Well done to them.

SARAH

Come on, your Dad was easy. I just smiled and sneaked in compliment wherever I could and that was that.

TED

(To HANK)

How did those interviews go?

HANK

I'm just waiting for a call from a potential job. You know how it is, Ted. No, you don't, because you're a stay at home dad/husband.

TED

Hey, I can relate. A little bit. I enjoy taking care of the kids, and my wife is very supportive.

HANK

Why are we close brothers again?

TED

I provide the beer, and you somehow put up with me.

HANK

Right, the beer.

TED

What time is the game coming on tonight?

HANK

At eight.

TED

So we have an hour's wait. I got chips, dipping sauce, and frozen cooked ribs if you want.

HANK

I don't have much of an appetite.

TED

It's the stress. You usually eat a lot.

HANK

I've lost a lot of weight. Forty-two pounds to be exact.

TED

Really?

HANK

I haven't been able to eat like a king. More like a peasant.

TED

You look like you've lost some weight, but forty-two pounds? I need to see a before and after picture because I'm not seeing it.

SARAH

He did.

TED
You've lost forty pounds, now please tell me the secret to your miraculous weight loss!

HANK
Ramen. Lots of ramen.

SARAH
There you have it, Ted. Ramen. Lots of ramen.
(They all laugh.)

SARAH
(Cont'd)
We've both had to make adjustments to the way that we live.

TED
I understand. Both Joyce and I were working but when the babies came along we had to make adjustments. She had the better job, so we decided that I would stay at home to take care of the babies. Just for their all important first year. I'll be looking for work in about two months.

SARAH
I'd love to babysit them.

TED
You're already hired.

SARAH
You hear that, Hank?

HANK
(Sarcastically)
Whoop-de-doo...

TED
You two can be such opposites sometimes.

HANK
We have our disagreements, especially in the baby department.

TED
You're just scared to be a father. And that's normal. The first one will break you in, and you'll just fall in love with them.

HANK
First one? What are you talking about?

TED

I'm just saying when you do decide to have the first one, and have it, then all your fears will be gone Mr. Paranoid.

HANK

Let's not talk about having babies.

TED

You're in the wrong house, Hank. This is a house of babies. So just try to keep calm, and you'll make it through the night.

HANK

See, honey. He's trying to make me have bad dreams.

SARAH

I'm actually happy you'll be around the babies. There's no place you can hide. You're trapped here so you're forced to get accustomed to them.

HANK

Why are you two talking like that?

TED

You're paranoid, Hank. You know what I want you to do?

HANK

What is it?

TED

Hold one of them. You're their uncle.

HANK

I will eventually.

TED

Eventually as in when they're in high school and they're ashamed to even walk next to you?

HANK

Okay, tomorrow, bring me one of the babies and I will hold them.

TED

Why not tonight?

HANK

Tonight is not good for me. But tomorrow I will.

TED

We'll see.

SARAH

And I will take some pictures.

HANK

(Sarcastically)
Sure, publicize the whole event.

TED

We will. Joyce and I post pictures of the babies to the family through social media all the time.

HANK

Great. Just great.

TED

I know it's been a couple of hours since you two arrived but do you guys need anything?

SARAH

No, Ted, we've already asked a lot of you and Joyce. I feel bad enough.

HANK

I'm with Sarah, though the free beer is always appreciated.

TED

For the game this evening, I have a rack in the fridge.

HANK

Are the babies going to be here? Beer and smelly babies don't go well together.

TED

Joyce will have them in the room.

SARAH

I don't mind smelly babies. Actually, here has that family smell. I miss my siblings.

(SARAH wipes away tears from her eyes.)

SARAH

(Cont'd)
I was raised in a family of six, and I was the oldest. It was just my mom and us, so I had to help out. I feel so homesick sometimes, since they all live in Alabama. That's why I think I like Joyce so much, being around her makes me feel more at home.

TED

So you're saying my baby smell is like some exotic perfume to you?

SARAH

Something like that.

HANK

This is making me sick. Off to your babies, Ted.

TED

They're sleeping.

HANK

Shouldn't you watch them sleep? Bad things can happen to a sleeping baby?

TED

All right, all right. But I'll be back.

HANK

The beer is your ticket into the living room, remember that.

TED

I live here, you know.

HANK

But this is our space. Remember, you gave it to us earlier. So basically, I own the TV.

(Hank and Sarah wave to Ted, and he exits into the unseen bedroom.)

SARAH

How did the interview go with Mr. Slater?

HANK

I think I have a good shot at getting this job. I had a terrible morning. Getting there was the frustrating part.

SARAH

Tell me about it.

HANK

I walked down the block, and you know that homeless man that I usually give a quarter to when I pass by? (Sarah nods.) He refused to accept my quarter, saying he doesn't steal from the poor. So I insist, practically begging him to take my quarter. He then says he knows all the best pantries in the neighborhood, and he'll take me out sometime. He then proceeds to hand me a quarter. (Sighs) That's how low my reputation has sunken in this neighborhood. Okay, then I'm on the train, and this guy comes through one of the cars, doing poetry then asking for spare change. I say to

(MORE)

HANK (cont'd)
myself, here's an opportunity to do good. I give him the two quarters I had, but he doesn't say thank you. So I say, a thank you would be appreciated. He then says his performance is thank you enough, and proceeds to threaten me. I had trouble finding Mr. Slater's building, and when I did find it, I got to the interview late. End of miserable story.

SARAH
Hank, poor Hank.

HANK
Poor me. What have I done to deserve all of this?

SARAH
Bad things happen to good people.

HANK
I don't know if I'm a good person.

SARAH
You haven't done anything bad to me.

HANK
I guess so.

SARAH
Everyone has a bad day.

HANK
But two hundred and fifty-three bad days in a row? Come on!

SARAH
So you're keeping count?

HANK
Misery makes you think of trivial matters.

SARAH
I do hope you get this job.

HANK
You've managed to stay hopeful through all the previous rejections.

SARAH
One will come sooner or later.

HANK
I prefer sooner.

SARAH

We both do, but we have to be realistic and be patient.

HANK

That's true.

SARAH

What time is Mr. Slater going to call?

HANK

He should any minute now.

SARAH

We'll get back on our feet, and we'll have what we had before and more. We'll go on a Caribbean cruise, and fly to Paris, and have a road trip. And fall in love again.

HANK

I've been hoping to get back on my feet from since eight months ago. My hope is almost dead. But keep on hoping, honey. Your hope gives me wings.

SARAH

It's not that bad. We're still eating.

HANK

Ramen. Everyday. I'm surprised I haven't gone to the emergency room yet. We haven't had a decent meal in months.

SARAH

You really miss my cooking.

HANK

Honestly, I miss eating out. We've already gone through this honey. You're a terrible cook. Terrible. You know why I married you? Because you're beautiful. Not for your cooking.

(HANK shudders.)

SARAH

I wish I could take my kiss back.

HANK

At least I'm being honest. Would you rather me lie to you by saying your cooking is absolutely amazing.

SARAH

Yes, I would.

HANK

That's not right.

SARAH

But it makes me feel good about myself.

HANK

It's that a woman thing, because I don't get it.

SARAH

Just call it a Sarah thing.

HANK

I don't like living a lie, so yes, your cooking is terrible. Sorry, honey, you married the wrong guy.

SARAH

I married the right guy, he's just flawed.

HANK

And broke.

SARAH

Be positive, Hank. I also married for better or worse.

HANK

It just upsets me that we're living off your babysitting and housecleaning money.

SARAH

Once we're eating, and have a roof over our head, it doesn't matter.

HANK

Again. Ramen. And we're back on our rent by three months. We can't get back in until we pay what we owe at the end of the month.

SARAH

Don't worry Hank. Just have faith.

(HANK kisses SARAH on the lips.)

HANK

Thanks for being understanding, honey. I'm really sorry for putting you through all this.

SARAH

Things happen.

HANKS

In New York.